

Out of the Archives

a newsletter from the Washington State Archives

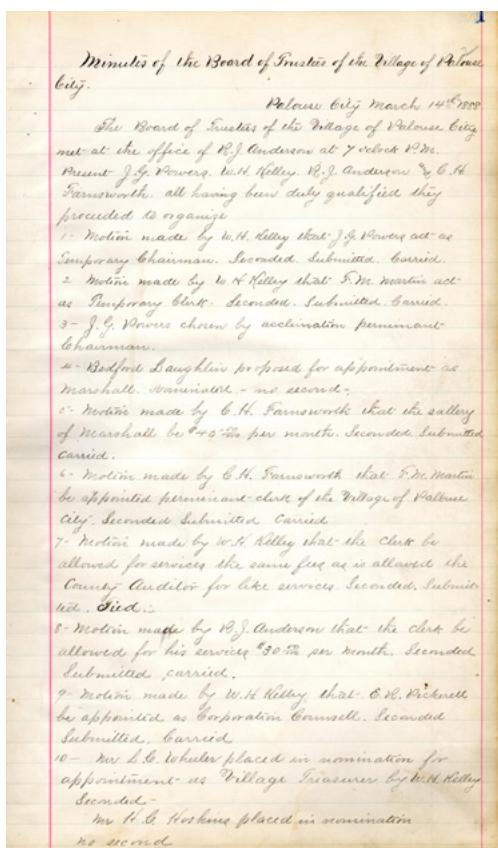
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Office of the Secretary of State

The Archives work with small towns, not just counties and big cities - Palouse edition

by Lee Pierce, Eastern Region Archivist



How can the Washington State Archives help a tiny municipality in the middle of wheat country? By reducing the burden of fulfilling public records requests for City Council records, and by preserving the foundational records of governance in a secure, environmentally controlled facility.

In April 2014, the City Clerk's Office in the town of Palouse, a city with a population of about 1,000 citizens, transferred 14 volumes of Minutes, four volumes of Ordinances and one binder of Resolutions to the State Archives facility in Cheney. Another, previously missing, volume of Minutes was subsequently located in Kansas and returned to the Town Clerk and eventually added to the series. These records were transferred to the State Archives with the understanding that the Archives staff would scan, index and upload the records to the Washington State Archives' Digital Archives as part of an "in-house" grant, done without cost to the municipal government.

The priority concerning which records to scan first was set by the Clerk's Office in response to the public records requests they were receiving most frequently. The project

was completed in September 2016. As segments of the scanned records were uploaded to the Digital Archives, the City Clerk's Office was quick to see the value of having these records online, and responded by conducting their own scanning project to preserve the Resolution records still in the City's custody and make them available via the Digital Archives, as well. We look forward to this partnership continuing for years to come.

The Washington State Archives' Digital Archives now has more than 2,000 Palouse records of governance online, and searchable by date, document number and keyword. This not only greatly improves the accessibility to the records and makes sure they are preserved, but it has also greatly reduced how much time the very small staff of the Clerk's Office must spend making copies of these records. The Washington State Archives facility in Cheney is in the process of similar projects for the City of Colfax and the Town of Farmington, as well.

